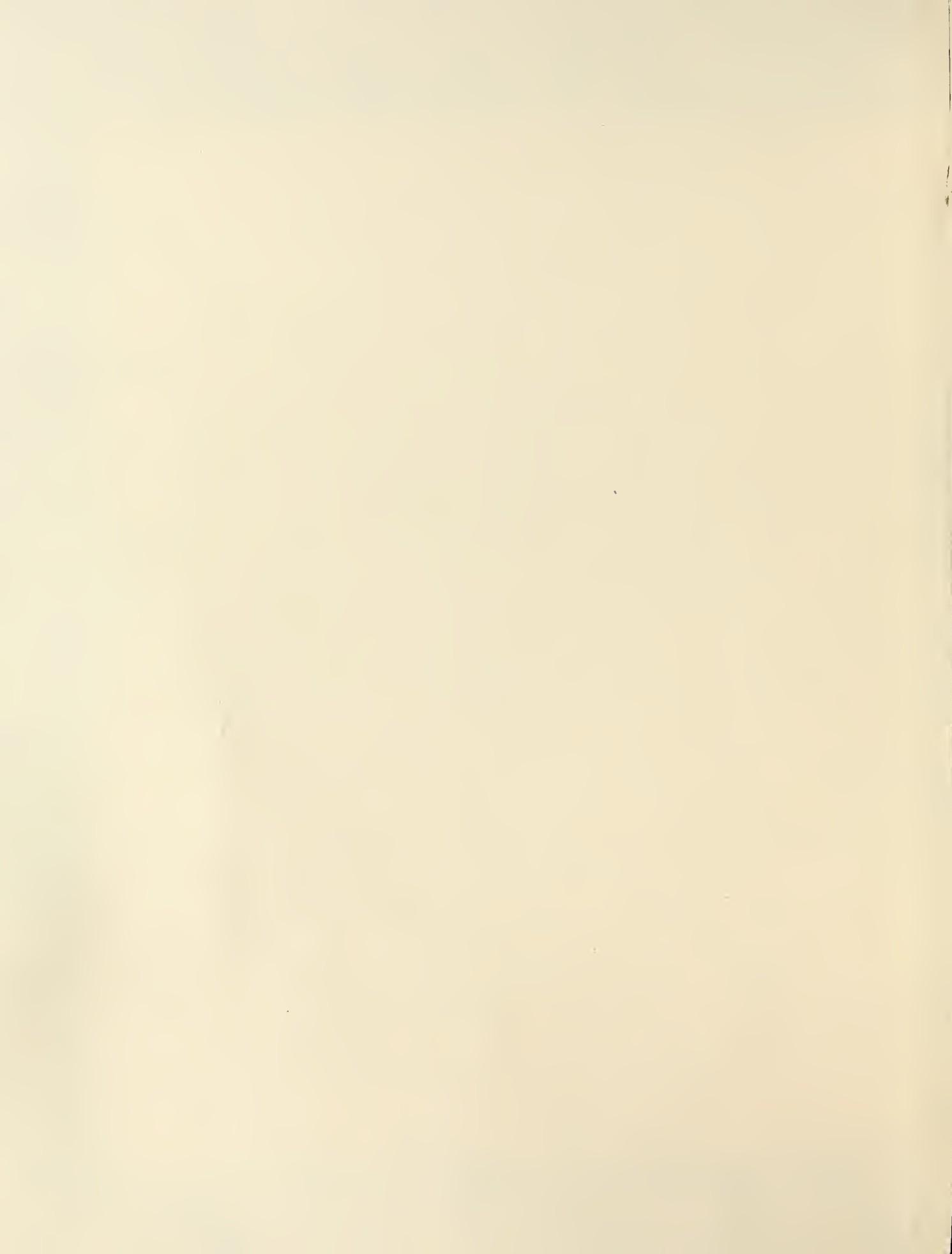


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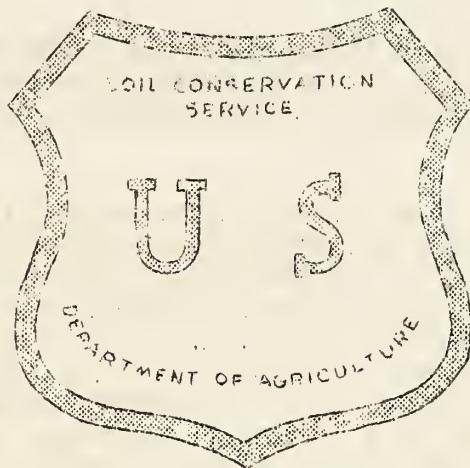
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# DAKOTA ZEPHYR

JANUARY, 1937

VOL 3 NUMBER 1



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SAVE THE SOIL  
IN  
SOUTH DAKOTA

## EDITORIAL

YOUR NEWS LETTER -- THE DAKOTA ZEPHYR -- IS OFF THE MIMEOGRAPH AGAIN AFTER SEVERAL MONTHS DURING WHICH THE SOUTH DAKOTA SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE STAFF WAS TOO BUSILY ENGAGED IN SOIL AND MOISTURE SAVING FIELD WORK, INCLUDING EMERGENCY DROUGHT RELIEF PROJECTS, TO MAINTAIN ITS UNINTERRUPTED PUBLICATION.

SINCE THE LAST REGULAR ISSUE, THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL IMPORTANT CHANGES IN THE SERVICE IN OUR STATE, AND WE ARE GOING INTO THE NEW YEAR OF 1937 WITH A RESOLUTION TO MAKE OUR PROGRAM -- YOUR PROGRAM -- MORE WORTH WHILE AND EFFECTIVE THAN EVER.

FIRST, THE STATE COORDINATOR HAS BEEN RELIEVED OF ACTIVE MANAGEMENT OF THE DEMONSTRATION PROJECT AT HURON AND HAS BEEN STATIONED AT THE STATE COLLEGE AT BROOKINGS WHERE HE CAN DEVOTE HIS UNDIVIDED ATTENTION TO PROBLEMS THROUGHOUT THE STATE, AND WHERE HE CAN COOPERATE MORE CLOSELY WITH COLLEGE AND EXTENSION SERVICE PERSONNEL. MR. A. D. ELLISON HAS BEEN TRANSFERRED TO THE HEADQUARTERS OF REGION NINE AT RAPID CITY, AS ASSISTANT CONSERVATOR TO MR. H. J. CLEMMER. MR. ROSS D. DAVIES SUCCEEDED MR. ELLISON AS STATE COORDINATOR, WITH REMOVAL OF THAT OFFICE TO BROOKINGS. MR. RAY L. GRAVES BECAME PROJECT MANAGER OF THE WOLSEY-SHUE CREEK PROJECT AT HURON. THE OTHER REGULAR DEMONSTRATION AREA CONTINUES IN FULL SWING AT WINNER, WITH MR. L. M. SLOAN THE PROJECT MANAGER.

LIKewise OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE HAS BEEN THE JOINT EMPLOYMENT BY THE EXTENSION SERVICE AND THE SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE OF MR. L. R. KENNEDY, FORMER HAIAKON COUNTY AGENT, AS EXTENSION SOIL CONSERVATIONIST TO WORK WITH VOLUNTARY SOIL CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION MEMBERS, COUNTY AGENTS AND OTHERS IN HELPING THEM WITH THEIR SOIL AND WATER PROBLEMS. HE HAS OFFICES WITH MR. DAVIES AT BROOKINGS AND IS AT YOUR SERVICE.

THERE ALSO HAS BEEN A REALIGNMENT OF THE SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE CAMPS ASSIGNED UNDER THE EMERGENCY CONSERVATION WORK, OR C.C.C., PROGRAM. AS A RESULT, SOUTH DAKOTA NOW HAS FOUR PERMANENT SCS CAMPS: ALCESTER, HURON, CHAMBERLAIN AND FORT MEADE OR STURGIS. THE FIRST THREE HAVE BEEN IN OPERATION MORE THAN A YEAR. THE STURGIS CAMP WAS SET UP LAST OCTOBER, WHEN THE PRESHO CAMP DISBANDED FOR THE WINTER.

FINALLY, BUT NOT OF LEAST IMPORTANCE BY ANY MEANS, THE NUMBER OF VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS HAS INCREASED FROM FIVE TO TWENTY-ONE SINCE WE LAST INKED THE DRUM, AND NOW BOAST A TOTAL MEMBERSHIP OF SOME 1200 FARMERS INTERESTED IN WISE FARMING PRACTICES TO SAVE THEIR SOIL AND CONSERVE THE MOISTURE.

HAPPY NEW YEAR !!!!

THE STAFF

T H E   D A K O T A   Z E P H Y R

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L. R. Kennedy, Extension Soil Conservationist

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January, 1937

No. 1

STATE SOIL SAVING LAW PROPOSED

Since 1933 soil erosion control and moisture conservation practices have been demonstrated by the Soil Conservation Service on cooperators' farms in demonstration and camp areas throughout the United States. In South Dakota the work has been in progress since February, 1935. The time is now at hand for providing machinery through which farmers outside of these necessarily limited number of formal demonstration projects may themselves carry on erosion control and prevention measures in communities or districts having common land use problems.

At the present time there are 21 voluntary soil conservation associations in the state. Through legislation these present associations and others which may be formed would be given a legal status. As an association then, they could carry out erosion prevention and control measures and water conserving practices, make equipment available for control operations and formulate land use regulations upon majority referendum approval of producers within conservancy district areas.

The need of some legal machinery to provide an effective attack upon problems of erosion control and moisture conservation in a given county or conservation district is apparent. A program can be worked out by the producers and land owners for individual and community benefit. Unless there is whole-hearted cooperation, desired benefits might not be achieved. One producer may treat his land to control wind or water erosion, but the failure of his neighbor to do likewise may undo much of his work. There are some examples of soil blowing from some farms next to land of cooperators, resulting in drifting listed rows or doing other damage on that part of the cooperators farm next to the uncontrolled area.

If legal provision is made for a majority of land occupiers in a district to vote in favor of a soil erosion control program, they will be able to prevent harm from uncontrolled fields by being legally in a position to require that such adjacent lands be controlled. It is not always possible for individual farmers to find machinery or labor to carry out desired conservation practices. A legal association may provide such equipment for use by all its members.

The Soil Conservation Service can carry on more effective work with associations through which to work. Technical help available can assist members of such associations in mapping out farm plans, and outlining work of a special nature.

Just what kind of a law is desired is a matter needing considerable thought by members of the present associations, legislators and other groups and individuals in the state interested in soil and water conservation. Proposals for such a law are now under consideration by interested groups such as the State Council of Agriculture, State Planning Board, farm organizations and others in cooperation with the Soil Conservation Service and State Advisory Committee, with a view to drafting suggestions which can be presented to the legislature for consideration.

## POTTER COUNTY FARMERS ACTIVE SOIL SAVERS

By L. J. Kennedy, Secretary  
Appomattox-Fayette Voluntary Conservation Association

Fifteen farmers in the area signed agreements with the Soil Conservation Service last fall. While all were anxious to get work started, due to the short time before freeze-up, work was undertaken on only nine farms.

In all cases, the farmers were more interested in receiving technical assistance and advice in drawing up a conservation program than they were in having the service do the work for them.

Two stock dams were surveyed and completed during the fall. These dams are located on the farms of John VonWald and Walter Wager. The VonWald dam will hold  $17\frac{1}{2}$  acre feet of water, and the Wager dam somewhat less. Men working on the dams were paid from WPA funds.

\*The farms of Arthur Wager and Fred Genzler were completely laid out in contour lines for farming on the level. On this work the farmers acted as rodmen, helping the Soil Conservation Service engineer and furnished the equipment and did the work of plowing in the lines. No compensation was received by the farmers for this work.

At the present time, partial lines have been laid out on the L. W. Herron, Carl Ochsner, Walter Wager, Leon Maltaverne, John VonWald and Harry Abuer farms. Fifteen acres of basin listing on the contour have been completed on the Maltaverne farm.

All farmers in the association have plowed or listed furrows every rod or so on all land subject to blowing. The value of this work has been well demonstrated in that very little soil drifting is in evidence, and a six-inch snow in November laid on this ground in a solid blanket rather than being blown into drifts.

The association has held three meetings since organizing last spring. It is planned to hold several meetings this winter to discuss common problems.

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It is significant that "in all cases the farmers were more interested in receiving technical assistance and advice in drawing up a conservation program than in having the service do the work for them." That is the important thing. The aim of the service is for every farmer who possibly can, to put into practice himself these soil and moisture saving methods. Also note the attention given to the important practice of contouring.

R.D.D. \*

CONSERVATION PRACTICES DEMONSTRATED ON TWO PROJECT AREAS  
IN SOUTH DAKOTA

WOLSEY-SHUE CREEK AREA

The year of 1930 was the first year of effort after agreements had been prepared in the Wolsey-Shue Creek Demonstration Area. This area consists of approximately 46,000 acres in the Wolsey area and 144,000 acres in the Shue-Creek area. November 1, 1930 there were 232 completed cooperative agreements covering 59,800 acres of farm land. Due to the drouth of 1930 it has not been possible to reach goals outlined for the year, but some good results were obtained. Sudan grass and cane have demonstrated their usefulness in years of drouth. Stands of these crops were established in 1930 on certain bad blow areas which give promise of complete control. If this can be done under conditions such as were present in 1930, we should look forward to a greater use of these crops in a conservation program. The alfalfa, sweet clover and grass that was seeded did not survive the year due to the drouth and grasshopper infestation.

The soils department completed the soil and erosion survey of the entire area. The woodland management department planted 492 acres of trees during the year. The percent of livability was small due to the drouth. The wildlife department developed 25 acres of nesting area near lakes, established 87 acres of refuges and have 33,593 acres under wildlife cooperative agreements to develop the wildlife program.

The engineering department constructed terraces to protect 80 acres of land, completed the construction of six water conservation dams, leveled 298 miles of drifted fence lines, leveled 805 acres of field soil hummocks, roughened 3,270 acres of blowing fields and laid out contour strip cropping lines on two farms of the area. Contour strip farming plans have been received with interest and several more farms will be planned on the contour.

In the emergency drouth program which started in July, 1930, 80 agreements were made with cooperators in nine voluntary soil conservation association areas outside of the regular demonstration area. Plans are to use practices on cooperators' farms such as strip cropping, contour strip cropping, crop rotation, pasture management, wildlife protection, woodland management, cleaning drifted fence rows and small water conservation dam construction.

There are three voluntary soil conservation associations with 84 members in the demonstration area. They are the Wolsey, Sheffield and Carpenter associations. Through their meetings and other activities, a much better understanding of the conservation program has been secured by the members.

Ray L. Graves  
Project Manager

WINNER-DIXON AREA

Since the Winner-Dixon Soil Conservation demonstration area was established fourteen months ago, 71 of the approximately 150 farms in the area are cooperating with the service. The acreage under agreement

totals 15,992 acres, of which 2,540 are being farmed on the contour and 9,320 in strips at right angles to the prevailing wind. In many cases the contour crop strips are protected from run-off by a terrace, which also serves as a guide line for the farmer to follow in future years. An increased interest is being shown in contour cultivation and it is certain that several additional farms will be farmed on the contour this next season.

One hundred and seventy miles of contour pasture furrows have been constructed and reseeded in an effort to rebuild the grazing capacities of these pastures. These pastures are also being improved by spreading excess drainage water, thereby irrigating the grass; by the construction of 8 stock-watering dams, and by regulated grazing.

Improved crop rotations have been instituted on 9,240 acres. Crested wheat grass is being introduced as a new hay and seed crop. One thousand, seven hundred acres of land are to be retired from cultivation and seeded to grass or alfalfa.

Seventeen farmers are cooperating in a wildlife management program, and 15 farm shelterbelt plantings are being established on farms. These farm plantings in most cases are being placed on the contour or so located that additional water can be diverted to the planting.

The activities of the service are guided by the Rosebud Voluntary Soil Conservation Association of 50 members which was organized a year ago.

L. M. Sloan  
Project Manager

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SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE COOPERATES IN EMERGENCY DROUTH  
RELIEF PROGRAM

When drouth developed last spring and Federal drouth relief funds were provided for employing WPA help, the Soil Conservation Service cooperated with the WPA in this state very closely and made it possible for nearly 1700 farmers to be employed on drouth relief projects, at least part time, since July, 1936. This work will be completed early in January. Preliminary summary of the work accomplished shows 56 dams started, of which 38 are now complete. Nine dams will be completed with WPA funds, work to be supervised by engineers of the Soil Conservation Service. Completion of six dams has been deferred until next spring. The remaining three dams will be completed during this next month by the Soil Conservation Service.

In the voluntary soil conservation areas 27,090 rods of fence were cleaned and 7,379 rods of fence were reset. This work was undertaken on 63 farms where operators had signed cooperative agreements for a five-year period with the Soil Conservation Service. Dams constructed were scattered throughout the state in association areas and emergency project areas which were approved by the State Advisory Committee. This emergency drouth relief work occupied considerable time of the regular project staff members and also some temporary help, especially engineers, who planned the dams and supervised their construction.

Most of these drouth relief dams were small earth dams with natural spillways that will be used for stock watering purposes in localities that are short of water.

It is significant that these dams were constructed by the farmers themselves with their own power and equipment. They will serve to demonstrate how farmers can supplement their water supply by constructing stock watering dams on their farms.

In the range counties in the northwestern part of the state, several drouth relief dams were constructed on stock trails leading to stock shipping centers and will provide watering points for ranchers who drive their stock overland to market.

Lowell A. Yost  
Project Engineer

The 1937 Agricultural Conservation program has been announced by Secretary of Agriculture, H. A. Wallace and H. R. Tolley, Administrator of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. In South Dakota a meeting has been held at Brookings by Washington officials with the State Committee, fieldmen, extension service supervisors and Advisory Committee to explain details and procedure. Starting January 4 a series of district conferences of County Committees and County Agents will be held at Brookings, Mitchell, Aberdeen, Pierre and Rapid City, and immediately following, educational and community election and sign-up meetings will be held in all counties. With the program being announced, now farmers will be able to plan their 1937 operations early to cooperate to the fullest extent with the program. By attending local educational meetings and keeping in touch with your local committeemen who will be kept informed by the County Committee and County Agent, you will find out how to cooperate in this conservation program.

The drouth, dust storms and floods of past three years give us warning, whose implications are more sinister than any temporary distress caused by low prices.

We shall not have capacity to produce enough food and feed for our own use unless we stop exploiting our natural resources. We are in position of a spendthrift who has more than enough for his daily needs, but whose bank balance is getting lower and lower.

The real threat of scarcity to the consumer is the threat of eroded and depleted land.

The necessity for conservation is the interest of all classes.

H. R. Tolley

Forty eight Spink County farmers met at Conde on October 19 for the purpose of discussing soil erosion problems. The discussion resulted in the organization of a voluntary soil conservation association taking in an area of five townships surrounding Conde. Mr. Charles Haskell was elected president of the association. Other officers of the association are as follows: W. H. Van Ornum, Vice-President; Edward H. Herr, Secretary-Treasurer; John Fredrickson and A. H. Schultz, Directors.

Farmers in Northern Brule and southern Buffalo Counties gathered December 3 to discuss the possibility of organizing an association in order to secure the cooperation of the Chamberlain CCC camp in control of wind erosion. All farmers present expressed a great deal of interest and decided to organize at their next meeting.

Mr. James Murtha, president of Silver Creek Voluntary Soil Conservation Association in Sanborn County, states that listing with a cover crop of oats broadcast has been very effective in controlling soil blowing on his farm during the past season.

The Silver Creek association plans on holding meetings each month until spring work begins.

Mr. Roy Jones, Secretary of the Jerauld County Voluntary Soil Conservation Association attended the hearing of the President's Drouth Committee at Bismarck, North Dakota, November 23, to carry the expression of farmers in that association regarding a long-time soil and water conservation program.

Mr. Ernest Holcomb of the Jerauld County Association writes "I am planning on putting my entire farm on a soil and moisture conservation basis next spring. I would like some information on how to lay out contour furrows and water spreader ditches. The idea being to carry the water along the slopes so that the soil may absorb all of it."

Inquiries of this kind are referred to the Extension Soil Conservationist who furnishes all information available and requests the Soil Conservation Service for technical assistance in planning operations. The Soil Conservation Service will furnish technical assistance for planning farm operation inssofar as it is possible. Since this help is limited, it is advisable that the County Agents be interviewed first who will likely have some information and will be glad to get whatever additional information is available.

## C. C. C. AIDS SOIL-WATER SAVING

Work done in South Dakota by C.C.C. camps assigned to the Soil Conservation Service has played a large part in establishing a sound erosion control program.

There are four permanent camps in the state now, attached to the Soil Conservation Service for work purposes in its soil and moisture saving program.

The first camp attached to the service in South Dakota was Camp SCS-1 at Chamberlain, which next year is expected to complete the Crow Creek water conservation dam fifteen miles north of Chamberlain. This project was begun by the Forest Service in 1934. It is also planned to develop contour pasture furrowing and other improvement work on the adjacent range land, and to do some wind erosion control demonstration work on farms near the camp in cooperation with the Brule-Buffalo Voluntary Soil Conservation Association.

Camp SCS-2 was located at Fresho, in Lyman county, in June, 1935. It completed the Hussman dam five miles southeast of Fresho, built two other earth dams for stock water and other uses, and carried on a complete wind erosion control program including pasture contour furrowing, contour listing and wind strip cropping on twelve demonstration farms in Medicine Creek Voluntary Soil Conservation Association. In October this camp moved to winter quarters elsewhere.

Down at Alcester in Union County, Camp SCS-3 has been carrying on a water erosion control demonstrational program since June, 1935. Hilly terrain and relatively high annual rainfall cause sheet and gully erosion to be the chief problems in this area. During the past year, 73 farms have benefitted by erosion control demonstration work. This has included terracing, contour furrowing, gully control and wood lot management; contour strip cropping, pasture stabilization, wildlife protection and other practices in the program in which the farm operators are cooperating. The Alcester Voluntary Soil Conservation Association of 90 members cooperates with the service in this work.

Camp SCS-4 moved from North Dakota to Huron in the fall of 1935 and has engaged in water conservation and wind erosion control work. During the past summer it finished building a rubble masonry dam across the James River at Huron, has built a dam at Lake Byron for use in cooperation with the State Game and Fish Commission and a large earthen dam on the Regional Boy Scout Camp grounds eight miles southwest of Miller; and has engaged in a complete wind erosion control program within the area of the Huron Voluntary Soil Conservation Association organized by cooperating farmers. The camp is also constructing a rubble masonry dam across the James River in Spink county.

The last camp established is SCS-6 at Fort Meade. It began work in October this year, and is engaged in a complete soil conservation program in the Sturgis area. A voluntary soil conservation association of 136 farmers in nine townships bordering the camp was organized November 5, 1936. Work is under way in pasture contour furrowing and range management, construction of stock water dams, and erosion control-moisture conserving cropping and tillage practices on various farms within the association.

## VOLUNTARY SOIL CONSERVATION ASSOCIATIONS

### What They Are

### What They Do

There are now twenty-one groups of farmers in various parts of South Dakota organized into Voluntary Soil Conservation Associations, which represent 1100 members and 500,000 acres of farm land.

These associations were organized primarily as a means of collective effort in erosion control by groups of farmers in localities where soil erosion has become a community problem. The associations furnish units through which individual farmers can learn of methods and practices which will aid them in erosion control. Such groups justify the use of Soil Conservation personnel in working out farm plans and assisting in the development of other technical problems which farmers cannot do themselves.

Some associations were organized hurriedly in order to take advantage of emergency erosion control work, looking forward to a longer time program at a later date. The real job of an association is to plan and carry out a local program through which its members can gain the most benefits from the erosion control demonstrations of the Soil Conservation Service, carrying information from the demonstration into practice on individual farms.

Now is the time for all Voluntary Soil Conservation Associations to make plans for the activity of their organization during 1937. Every association should hold at least four meetings between January 1 and the beginning of spring work so that its members may have a good understanding of erosion control practices which may be included in their farming operations during the coming season. Erosion problems in each association are somewhat different, and should be studied carefully before determining policies to be followed.

The Extension Service is responsible for all educational work concerning soil conservation. The Extension Soil Conservationist at Brookings works with County Agents in furnishing information to the associations and secures available assistance from the Soil Conservation Service in order that sound erosion control programs may be developed.

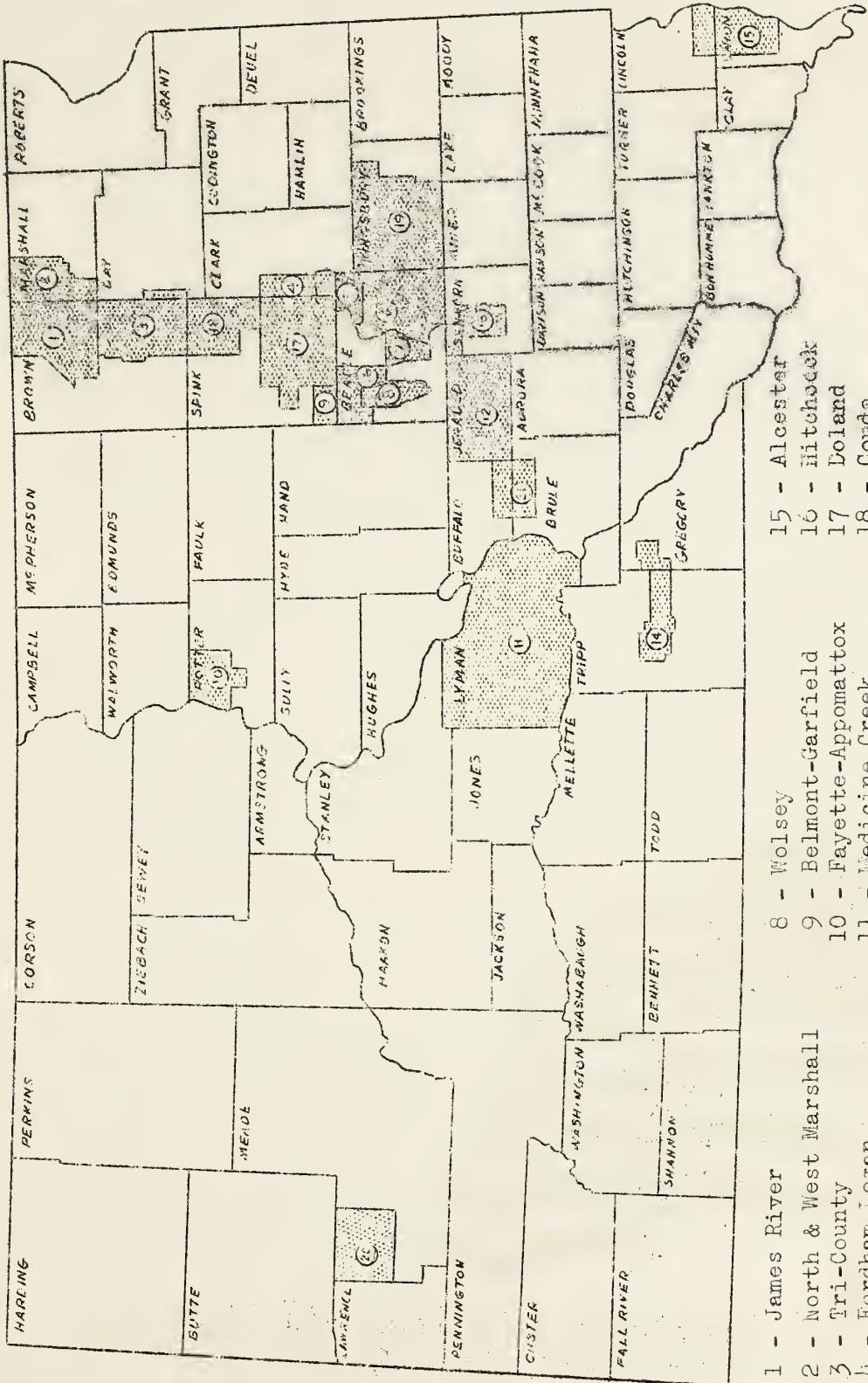
### Suggested Outline for Association Meetings

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| <u>January</u>  | Annual organization meeting. Explanation of year's program by Extension Conservationist or County Agent. |
| <u>February</u> | Soils school. Study of soil in the association, causes of local erosion problems.                        |
| <u>March</u>    | Farm account school. Agricultural outlook for 1937.  |
| <u>April</u>    | Erosion control practices. Contouring, strip cropping, etc. Tour of nearest demonstration project.       |

L.R.K.

# VOLUNTARY SOIL CONSERVATION ASSOCIATIONS

JAN 1, 1937



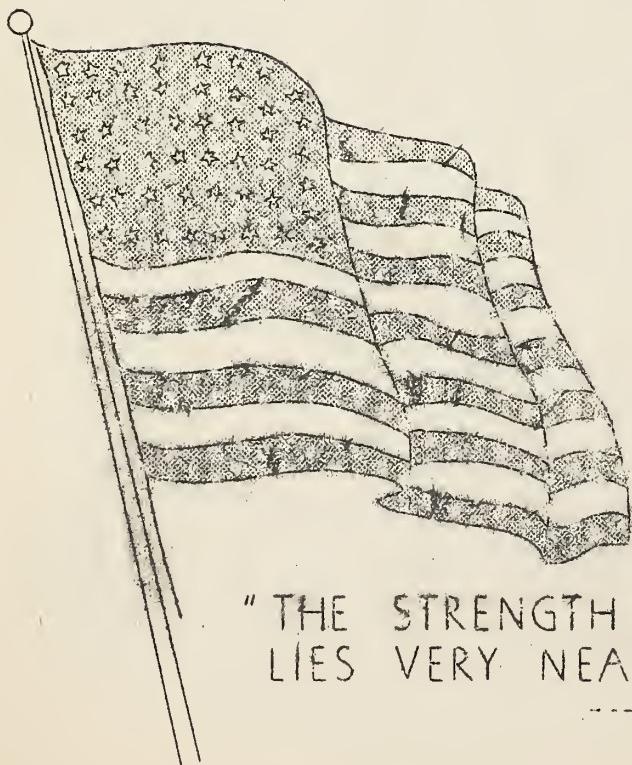
- 1 - James River
- 2 - North & West Marshall
- 3 - Tri-County
- 4 - Fordham-Logan
- 5 - Carpenter
- 6 - Sheffield
- 7 - Huron
- 8 - Wolsey
- 9 - Belmont-Garfield
- 10 - Fayette-Appomattox
- 11 - Medicine Creek
- 12 - Jerauld County
- 13 - Silver Creek
- 14 - Rosebud
- 15 - Alcester
- 16 - Hitchcock
- 17 - Doland
- 18 - Conde
- 19 - Kingsbury-Beaumont
- 20 - Sturgis
- 21 - Brule-Belle Fourche

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

Ross D. Davies, State Coordinator  
Brookings, South Dakota

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"THE STRENGTH OF THE NATION  
LIES VERY NEAR THE SOIL"

----- DANIEL WEBSTER

# DAKOTA ZEPHYR

APRIL, 1937

VOL. 3 NUMBER 2

Published by: The Soil Conservation Service  
State Coordinator's Office  
Brookings, South Dakota

Ross D. Davies, State Coordinator

L. R. Kennedy, Extension Soil  
Conservationist

Dear Cooperator:

Since our last newsletter sent you at the beginning of the year, there have been many interesting developments in soil conservation work, and in this issue of the Dakota Zephyr we will endeavor to describe some of them.

Most important perhaps is the passage by the legislature in this state of a State Soil Conservation Districts Law, which provides for the establishment of districts as legal state subdivisions empowered to carry on soil conservation work. This law becomes effective July 1, 1937.

The Extension Service, through County Agents and the state staff, has enlisted the cooperation of a number of farmers throughout the state located in adjacent counties to operating projects to demonstrate some of the practices which have been found to be practical on Soil Conservation Service project or camp areas.

Voluntary associations have been holding meetings during the winter. Reports from the officers indicate some well attended, interesting meetings. Discussions have been held and additional meetings are scheduled.

One tour on the Winner project was attended by a number of farmers, County Agents and state extension workers, the State Agricultural Conservation Committee and farmer fieldmen. Many practices being followed coincide with phases of the 1937 Agricultural Conservation Program.

Reports from over the state on moisture conditions indicate that late March and early April snow and rain has brought the total moisture for the year up to normal or above. Spring seeding has been delayed, but everybody is happy to have the moisture.

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## SUMMARY OF SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS LAW

Enacted by the 1937 Legislature, State of South Dakota, to become effective July 1, 1937.

This act, which follows closely recommendations of the United States Secretary of Agriculture, provides a procedure by which soil conservation districts may be organized and become governmental subdivisions of the state in the exercise of certain powers, particularly the power to establish and administer erosion control demonstrations and preventive measures.

The act establishes a "State Soil Conservation Committee" which has power to define the boundaries of a district, to encourage the organization of districts, to bring about an exchange of information on experience among the districts in the state, and to coordinate the several district programs "so far as this may be done by advice and consultation". Each district is an independent unit and is not subject to the control of the State Committee. The committee consists of the Director of Extension, Director of Experiment Station, Commissioner of School and Public Lands, and the Rural Credit Director. These four may invite the United States Secretary of Agriculture to appoint one person to serve as a member of the committee. All members are ex-officio, serving by reason of the positions they hold, and serve without any additional compensation. This committee was named in this state in order to enlist the cooperation of the educational and scientific research agencies in the state dealing with agriculture. Also there is a large amount of public land in the state which is under direction of the school land and rural credit departments, and in any district formed or in any program carried on, these agencies would be vitally interested. It is presumed that if invited, the United States Secretary of Agriculture will appoint a representative of the Soil Conservation Service in order that the fullest cooperation of that agency, which handles soil erosion activities of the federal government, might be made available to aid districts.

### Procedure for District Organization and Operation

Any 25 owners of land lying within a proposed district may file a petition with the State Committee asking that a district be organized. The act defines a landowner as "any person, firm, or corporation, public or private, who shall hold the record legal title to any agricultural, grazing, or forest lands lying within a district organized under the provisions of this Act, or his or their authorized agent". The State Committee is required to give public notice of a hearing to be held upon the petition, to hold such hearing, to define the boundaries of the proposed district and then to submit the question whether the district should be created to all owners of land lying within those boundaries. No district may be established unless at least two-thirds of the votes cast in the referendum are in favor of it. The vote must represent at least two-thirds of the area included within the district.

If organization of a district is approved by the State Committee, after a favorable referendum, the State Committee appoints two supervisors for the district. They petition the Secretary of State for a charter. When the charter is granted, nominations are called for, and three supervisors are elected by land occupiers residing within the boundaries of the district.

The act defines a land occupier as "any person, firm, or corporation, who holds title to or is in possession of lands, either as owner, lessee, renter, tenant or otherwise". Elected supervisors serve for a term of three years each. Appointed supervisors serve for a term of one year each.

The governing body of the district consists of the five elected and appointed supervisors. They are to receive no compensation. These supervisors will have the power to carry out soil erosion preventive and control measures; to enter into agreements with farmers, and give them financial or other assistance; to acquire property for project purposes; to make available to land occupiers, equipment, materials or supplies needed for control operations; to take over and operate state and federal erosion control projects, and to develop and recommend land use plans for soil conservation. These powers can be carried out upon private lands only with the consent of the owner.

In addition to these powers, the supervisors of each district may formulate ordinances prescribing land use regulations for soil conservation. Such regulations cannot go into effect, however, until they have been submitted to a referendum of the land occupiers and have been approved by at least a two-thirds vote. The vote must represent at least two-thirds of the land area of the district. Although the supervisors are not required to put the regulations into effect, if they are placed into operation, they must apply uniformly throughout the district. Regulations may be amended or repealed, but only after they have been submitted to referendum. Regulations may include requirements for engineering operations such as terracing, contour or other methods of cultivation, strip cropping, retirement from cultivation of highly erosive areas, and similar means and measures. These provisions are included in order that a procedure may be outlined for the large majority of the district's land occupiers after they have become convinced of the necessity of certain land use practices, and have made every effort to establish the practices through voluntary cooperation in order to protect themselves from a minority that may refuse to cooperate.

Sufficient safeguards that regulations will not be adopted in advance of favorable community opinion lie in the following restrictions: Any regulations adopted require a two-thirds vote and apply uniformly on all lands, including those of supervisors; that the regulations can be amended or repealed; that the elected supervisors serve for three years, and that the association can be discontinued at the end of a three-year period by referendum. If the desired soil conservation practices are accomplished on a voluntary basis, no land use regulations may even be needed.

Rights of the individual are protected to the utmost. In any district which adopts land use regulations, the act requires that a Board of Adjustment be established. Upon petition of the land occupiers, this board is authorized to permit variances from land use regulations in cases where application of the strict letter of the regulations would result in great practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships. Decisions of the Board of Adjustment are subject to review by the local courts.

Districts are authorized to cooperate with one another, and all agencies of the state are to cooperate to the fullest extent.

The districts are not authorized to levy any taxes or special assessments, issue any bonds or incur any indebtedness. The district may

accept assistance from the state or federal government or from any of its agencies, local assistance, or assistance from any other source, to carry out the purposes of the act.

Some of the basic considerations in the act which are considered fundamental are:

1. A genuine attack on the erosion problem requires more than construction of terraces or dams. Adjustment of land-use practices and cropping programs may be desirable.

2. Virtually all lands within certain natural bounded areas should be brought under control.

3. This program can be made effective only if farmers cooperate voluntarily. Machinery is created which farmers can use when they are convinced that such action is desirable, to vote land-use regulations upon themselves and their district where it is for the public good.

4. The program must be in farmers hands. Federal, state or other public agencies may advise, inform and assist, but responsibility rests with local people to outline and carry out intelligent programs of adjustment.

5. Because of the wide variance in conditions, programs must be developed locally and must be flexible.

6. Costs of operations should not be carried wholly by the land affected if beneficial results are obtained which increase public welfare and social good.

The standard soil conservation districts law enables farmers in any area voluntarily to organize themselves into a district so that they may apply practical, sound land-use practices learned from state and federal erosion control demonstration projects, or other sources. Complete power is reserved to the farmers to determine if a district shall be organized, to name and elect the supervisors, to outline the program of soil conservation and put it into effect.

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NEWS FROM VOLUNTARY SOIL CONSERVATION ASSOCIATIONS  
OVER THE STATE

ALCESTER

L. D. Ericson, President of the Alcester association, is placing his entire farm under a complete conservation program involving terracing, gully control, contour strip cropping, stock water dam construction, and woodland management and wildlife programs. The association held two meetings at the Soil Conservation Service camp during March, at which meetings erosion control practices were explained by members of the camp staff, County Agents and farmers. Sixty farmers in the area are keeping records on their farm business with the assistance of the camp superintendent.

SILVER CREEK

Farmers in Sanborn County have been discussing means of controlling erosion on sandy areas of idle land. Ed Nelson, Chairman of the Sanborn County Agricultural Conservation Committee, states that he feels that the voluntary association can do much towards obtaining good conservation practices in the section of the county where soils blow easily. The association has been studying the districts law at recent meetings, and is arranging, through the County Agent and the Soil Conservation Service, for several demonstration farms.

STURGIS

Albert and Leo Keffler are planning to terrace sixty acres of land that is to be seeded to alfalfa this spring. This demonstration will be the first of its kind in the western part of the state.

The Sturgis association has held four meetings during the winter, with an average attendance of fifty members. Forty-five members of the association are keeping farm records in order to show the effects of conservation practices on their farm business.

ROSEBUD

Alex Stenson, President of the Rosebud Association near Winner, reports that members of that association are very much interested in contour farming. He points out that a large percentage of run-off can be held on the slopes and allowed to penetrate into the soil when crops are planted on the level, rather than up and down the hill. The Rosebud association has been studying soils at meetings during the winter, trying to determine some of the causes of erosion and possible means of control.

John Postlewaite is trying out thirty acres of contour strip farming on his farm west of Winner. The County Agent arranged for some help from the Soil Conservation Service in assisting Mr. Postlewaite in drawing up his contour plans.

CARPENTER

Frank Hannigan, President of the Carpenter association, states that there are great possibilities under the Soil Conservation Districts law for organized community effort in establishing a permanent conservation program developed and administered by the local people. The Carpenter association is discussing the details of the districts law at its regular meetings.

DOLAND

The Doland association in Spink County boasts the largest attendance at any association meeting. One hundred and seventy farmers met at Doland on April 7 to discuss their erosion problems and to learn about the new Soil Conservation Districts law. The Agricultural Conservation Committee works closely with the voluntary associations in Spink County, attending their meetings and working towards a unified agricultural program for the county. H. E. Hanson, President of the Doland Association, says that the people within the association area must get together and discuss their mutual problems before they can develop a workable conservation program which, under the districts law, might lead to a more permanent agriculture. He points out: "We must have a definite program outlined before we can expect outside assistance in helping us solve our problems".

JERAULD COUNTY

The Soil Conservation districts law was discussed by the Board of Directors of the Jerauld County association during March. The association is arranging for a number of demonstration farms for the purpose of trying out some of the conservation practices which might be used in that area if a legal district were formed. The first demonstration of this type was started on the Ernest Holcomb farm north of Wessington Springs. It includes contour furrowing and related practices. Mr. Holcomb is simply rearranging his farming practices on a conservation basis with the Soil Conservation Service helping him lay out his plans. A similar demonstration is under way on the N. E. Beers farm in this same locality.

BELMONT-GARFIELD

Farmers in the southwestern corner of Spink County have a difficult problem in controlling the light sandy soil in that area. Henry Schroeder, Chairman of the Association states: "We find rough tillage alone will not hold the soil. We need to establish some vegetative cover like sudan, cane or rye either planted or broadcast. With the surface roughened, leaving this cover crop over winter to catch snow and increase moisture supply." The association is studying the Soil Conservation Districts Law and its possible application to that area.

Soil and Water Conservation Practices Demonstrated  
Through Cooperation of Extension Service  
and  
Soil Conservation Service

The Agricultural Extension Service of South Dakota and the Soil Conservation Service, Region 9, have agreed upon a cooperative plan for extending and promoting the use of the best known soil and water conservation practices among farmers of South Dakota, by making available advisory and technical assistance for the establishment of a limited number of demonstration farms in counties near project or camp areas of the Soil Conservation Service.

Practices which may be easily carried out by farmers by merely rearranging their present farming program include contour strip cropping, wind strip cropping, gully control, rough tillage, pasture contour furrowing, water diversion, rotation grazing, tree planting, wildlife encouragement and other measures.

Farmers interested in carrying out some of these practices make application to their County Agent by filling out an application form giving certain information necessary in determining the conservation practices most adaptable. When the application is approved, the Soil Conservation Service will assist the farmer in drawing up and laying out the conservation practices to be used.

The extent to which this program will be developed depends on the amount of help which the Soil Conservation Service is able to furnish in laying out conservation plans. At present work is under way in the following counties: Spink, Kingsbury, Hand, Jerauld, Sanborn, Buffalo, Brule, Potter, Tripp, Lawrence, Meade, Harding and Butte. Plans for work in these counties are taking up all the technical assistance available at the present time.

